

JOSIE DI SCIASCIO-ANDREWS

Windfalls

This was the land's end: a curved fist
of carboniferous rock. Millennia
of cramped pink slate. Fossilized
metacarpals tenaciously gripping
mile long strips of sand.

Once, the suede-stitched teepees
of the Algonquin and the Iroquois
kinged the horizon here.
Before the Loyalists came.
Before the rest of us.

Drums beating in moonlight. Mares'
hoof taps hailing through pines. Through ash.
Archaic tribes of falconers at one with falcons.
They came and went through time clean as the
surf.

Theirs was the era of fishes. Of birds.
Old, virgin myths of origins. When men
paid homage to the earth with totems. Sacredness
now relegated like tourist trinkets. Whimsies
of the human. Gated in reserves by the sovereign.
Holograms of a mystical past.

Their ghosts admonish. Defy us to look back.

Now that the land and water suffer injury.
Now that the dangers are many.

Invisibly, in water, liquid poisons
insinuate their ink dissolves of skulls
and bones like dirty rumours.

Once children swam in this lake.
Families made camp fires here. Cooked buffalo.
At dusk, smudged offerings of sweet grass
to keep malevolence at bay.

Now, the air from the refineries is foul.
Hearts of darkness have long impaled hog heads
on sticks. Stacked their bones and grist for fences.

"There is no godhead left," Nietzsche announced.
But cash to be made. And lights in distant towers.

Over two centuries, so many immigrants
have bent across these shores picking up stones.
Aiming them like dreams through stars.
Ablating griefs to ever morphing spirits.

Tonight, some men wearing turbans
have parked their SUV's. Are passing opium
in a circle to each other from some exotic flasks.

Trapped in a mossy tangle of algae,
empty liquor bottles, hypodermic
needles and fast food wrappers spell
words of coping strategies. Of numbing.

From the shadow of every stone
looms news of some apocalypse.

With both past and future, so far away,
we steer close to this trail's beaten path like
animals
fearful of slaughter. Losing ourselves in chimeras
of a gifting. Of some sweeter fruit from a forbidden
tree.
This Eden we keep on reasoning our way out
of. Forgetting.

And what have we ever learned from treacheries,
but to be treacherous?
What have we done, but lose our hearts
in order to survive?

I reach for a cigarette. Inhale the toxic
silence. I would rather have gills than a brain.
"I think, therefore I am." said Descartes.
But at this point, I would rather be any fish.
Primordial.
Innocent. Swim back to paradise. Get wasted
on water.

Josie Di Sciascio-Andrews has written three collections of poetry: The Whispers of Stones, Sea Glass and The Red Accordion. Two new collections are forthcoming. In 2013 she was shortlisted for Descant's Winston Collins Best Canadian Poem Prize. Josie lives, teaches and writes in Oakville Ontario, Canada.